Conference on Disarmament

17 August 2018

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Note verbale dated 3 August 2018 from the Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations at Geneva addressed to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, and in its capacity as the Coordinator for the Group of 21

The Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations has the honour to submit herewith the G-21 Working paper on Nuclear Disarmament.

On behalf of the Group of 21, the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam requests that the document be issued as an official Working paper of the Conference on Disarmament for the year 2018.

The permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament the assurance of its highest consideration.

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Nuclear disarmament

1. The Group of 21 reiterates that the Conference of Disarmament is the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, and in that context, the Group stresses that its highest priority on the Conference of Disarmament agenda is nuclear disarmament.

2. The Group reiterates its deep concern at the danger posed to the survival of humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. As long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use and proliferation will remain.

3. The Group reiterates its position as conveyed in its previous statements to the Conference of Disarmament and recalls the Final Documents of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly -the First Special Session on Disarmament and the very first resolution of the United Nations General Assembly 1(1) of 1946, adopted unanimously, which called for the elimination of nuclear weapons from national arsenals.

4. The Non-Aligned Movement Countries members of the Group recall the 2012 Tehran Summit Declaration and the Final Document of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Declaration and the Final Document of the XVII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Margarita Island, Venezuela on September 2016, as well as the Final Document of the 18th Mid-Term Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan on April 2018.

5. Furthermore, the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion of 1996, concluded that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In this regard, the Group recalls its strong support for the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/58 entitled, "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons".

6. The Millennium Declaration in 2000 also reaffirmed the commitment of Member States of the United Nations to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons.

7. The Group welcomes the formal proclamation, for the first time in history, of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, on 28-29 January 2014, which includes the commitment of all States of that region to further nuclear disarmament as a priority goal and to contribute to general and complete disarmament. Hopefully, this proclamation will be followed by other political proclamations as "Zones of Peace" in other regions of the world. The Group welcomes the Political Declaration of Quito, adopted at the Fourth Summit of Latin American and Caribbean States held in Quito, Ecuador, on 27 January 2016, which reaffirms, inter alia, the commitment of CELAC to the preservation of peace and international security, political independence and nuclear disarmament conducive to general, total and verifiable disarmament. The Group also welcomes the Political Declaration of Punta Cana, adopted at the Fifth Summit of Latin American and Caribbean States held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on 25 January 2017, which reaffirms, inter alia, the commitment of CELAC achieve a total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. CELAC reaffirms its commitment to the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace and highlights its character of first ever Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The Group welcomes the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco on 14 February 2017 in Mexico, in the framework of the 25th Session

of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL).

8. The group also welcomes the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty, known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, signed in Cairo, Egypt, in 1996. The Treaty, which came into effect on 15th July, 2009, seeks to prevent the stationing of nuclear explosives devices, prohibit the testing of nuclear weapons, and the dumping of radioactive waste on the continent. For the purpose of ensuring compliance with the obligations under the treaty, the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) was established.

9. The Group, while noting the steps taken by nuclear-weapon States (NWS) for the reduction of their arsenals, reiterates its deep concern over the slow pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament and the lack of progress by the NWS towards accomplishing the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The Group stresses the importance of effective implementation of concrete measures leading to a nuclear weapons free world. This requires renewed political will by the international community towards accelerated progress on nuclear disarmament. The Group hope that all States would seize all opportunities towards this end.

10. The Group welcomes the convening and results of the high level meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament on 26 September 2013 and reaffirms its related resolution A/RES/70/34 and A/RES/72/251 to follow up to this meeting. As the former Secretary General of the United Nations rightly mentioned in the Conference of Disarmament in 2015 "The High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament demonstrated that this issue remains a major international priority and deserves attention at the highest levels". In this vein, the Group fully supports the goals of this resolution, in particular its call for urgent decision by the Conference of Disarmament to commence negotiating nuclear disarmament, particularly a comprehensive Convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. The Group also welcomes the decision to convene, in New York no later than 2018, a UN high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard. The Group welcomes with appreciation the establishment of September 26 as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, and the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly organized every year to commemorate and promote this International Day, highlighting the events around the world in commemoration of this day, and calls on governments, parliaments and civil society to take further action annually to commemorate the day. In this context, the Group recalls its working paper contained in CD/2063 and CD/2067.

11. The Group reaffirms the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery. It notes the report of the Open-Ended Working Group mandated by the United Nations General Assembly "to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons" and hopes that it would contribute towards negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference of Disarmament, particularly a comprehensive Convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

12. The Group takes note of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on July 7th 2017 at the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, pursuant to UNGA resolution 71/258 held in New York from 27 to 31 March and 15 June to 7 July 2017.

13. The Group expresses its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate, and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear weapon detonation and its long term catastrophic consequences on human health, environment, and other vital economic resources, thus endangering the life of present and future generations. In this regard, the Group believes that the full realization of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must underpin all approaches, efforts and international commitments towards nuclear disarmament, through an inclusive process involving all States.

14. The Group concurs with the former United Nations Secretary General that there is growing understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and in this regard welcomes the hosting of the Conferences on this subject, convened in Oslo on 4-5 March 2013, in Mexico on 13-14 February 2014 and in Vienna on 8-9 December 2014.

15. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) welcome the spirit of the findings of the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, together with the pledges and national statements made by many states during and since the Vienna Conference aimed at securing progress on nuclear disarmament through the negotiation of legally binding effective measures, particularly a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT call on all nuclear weapon states parties to the NPT to implement their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament to which all states parties are committed to under Article VI. Given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and unacceptable risks and threats associated with a nuclear weapon' detonation, the States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT will endeavour to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. In this regard, the Group notes the relevant resolutions adopted by the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

16. The Group, stressing its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, underscores the urgent need to commence negotiations on this issue, in the Conference of Disarmament, without delay. In this context, the Group reaffirms its full readiness to start negotiations on a phased program for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear-weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time.

17. In this regard, the Group emphasizes that fundamental principles of transparency, verification and irreversibility shall be applied to all nuclear disarmament measures.

18. The Group reaffirms that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are substantively interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

19. The G-21 emphasizes that progress in nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, in all its aspects, is essential to strengthening international peace and security. The Group reaffirms that efforts towards nuclear disarmament, global and regional approaches and confidence building measures complement each other and should, wherever possible, be pursued simultaneously to promote regional and international peace and security.

20. The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of such weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWS) against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as a matter of high priority. The Group expresses concern that despite the

commitment of the nuclear weapon States (NWS) and long standing requests by NNWS to receive such legally binding assurances, no tangible progress has been achieved in this regard. It is a matter of more concern that NNWS implicitly or explicitly have been subject to nuclear threats by some nuclear weapon States contrary to their obligations under the UN Charter. The Group also calls for the commencement of negotiations in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances in accordance with UNGA resolution A/RES/72/59.

21. The Group expresses its concerns about strategic defence doctrines of NWS and a group of States which set out rationales for the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and in this regard, there is therefore a genuine and urgent need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in strategic doctrines and security policies to minimize the risk that these weapons will ever be used again and to facilitate the process of their elimination. In this regard, the Group recalls its strong support of the objectives of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 72/41 of 4 December 2017 "Reducing Nuclear Danger", as well as the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/71/53 on "Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons Systems".

22. The G-21 stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the CTBT, including by all NWS, which, inter alia, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. The Group reiterates that if the objectives of the Treaty were to be fully realized the continued commitment of all States signatories, especially the NWS, to nuclear disarmament would be essential.

23. The Group reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in these areas. In this regard, the Group strongly supports the objectives of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/48 of 4 December 2017 on the "Promotion of Multilateralism in the Area of Disarmament and Non-proliferation".

24. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT express their disappointment and deep concern that three States Parties, including two States that bear special responsibility as NPT depositary and co-sponsors States of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference Resolution on the Middle East, blocked consensus on the draft outcome document of the ninth NPT Review Conference (NPT RevCon) including the process to establish a Middle East Zone free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction, as contained in the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. This could undermine efforts towards strengthening the NPT regime as a whole. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT reaffirm that the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East continues to constitute the basis for the establishment of such a zone and that the 1995 Resolution remains valid until fully implemented. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT also express their serious concern over the lack of implementation of the 1995 Resolution, and in accordance with Para 6 of this Resolution, 'Call upon all States party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction,' and reaffirm that the co-sponsors of the Resolution must take all the necessary measures to fully implement it without further delay. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT express their utmost concern that the persistent lack of implementation of the 1995 Resolution, contrary to the decisions made at the relevant NPT Review Conferences, erodes the credibility of the NPT and disrupts the delicate balance among its three pillars, taking into account that the indefinite extension of the treaty is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. In this context, the States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT reaffirm the urgency of Israel's

accession to the Treaty without further delay and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. While the lack of agreement on an outcome document could undermine the NPT regime, the States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT emphasise the continued validity of all relevant commitments made in 1995, 2000 and 2010, particularly the unequivocal undertaking towards nuclear disarmament, and calls for their full implementation without further delay.

25. The Group also wishes to reaffirm the inalienable right of each State to develop research production and use of nuclear energy, for peaceful purposes without discrimination.

26. The Group reiterates its readiness to make constructive contributions to the work of the Conference, and in this regard wishes to recall the contents of documents CD/36/Rev.1; CD/116; CD/341; CD/819; CD/1388; CD/1462; CD/1570; CD/1571, CD/1923, CD/1938, CD/1959, CD/1999, CD/ 2044, CD/2063 and CD/2099 presented by the G-21 towards this end.

27. The Group takes note of the substantive and interactive informal discussions on nuclear disarmament held in the Conference of Disarmament from 21-23 May 2014 pursuant to the Schedule of Activities of the 2014 session contained in document CD/1978, on 11 and 18 June 2015 pursuant to the Schedule of Activities of the 2015 session contained in document CD/2021, and on 8-10 August 2017 under the Working Group on the Way Ahead established by decision CD/2090.

28. In view of the Group's strong commitment to nuclear disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons, the G-21 reiterates the following concrete steps:

(a) Reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment of the NWS to accomplish the complete elimination of nuclear weapons;

(b) Elimination of the role of nuclear weapons in the security doctrines;

(c) Adoption of measures by nuclear-weapon States to reduce nuclear danger, such as de-alerting of nuclear-weapons and decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear-weapons systems;

(d) Negotiation of a universal, unconditional and legally-binding instrument to assure NNWS against the use or threat 'of use of nuclear weapons;

(e) Negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a Nuclear Weapons Convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time.

29. To conclude, the Group of 21 highlights with satisfaction the events that took place around the world to mark the commemoration of 26 September, as the "International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons" devoted to furthering this objective, including through enhancing public awareness and education about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their total elimination, in order to mobilize international efforts towards achieving this goal. and in this context calls upon Member States to participate every year at the highest possible level in the one-day high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate and promote this International Day and also invites Member States, the United Nations system, civil society, academia, parliamentarians, the mass media and individuals to take additional measures every year to commemorate this date.